

State Emergency Coordination Center (SECC)

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Situation Report for August 10, 2007

(issued @ 1500 hrs.)



2007 FIRES

Report Includes:

- Background Information
 - Fire Restrictions & Closures
 - Air Quality
 - Road Closures/Travel Restrictions
- Current Incident Situation
- New Large Fires
- Weather
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- Requests for State Financial Assistance
- Summary of State Resources Committed
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Important Websites:

State of Montana Fire Information:

<http://mt.gov/fire.asp>

National Interagency Fire Center

http://www.nifc.gov/fire_info/nfn.htm

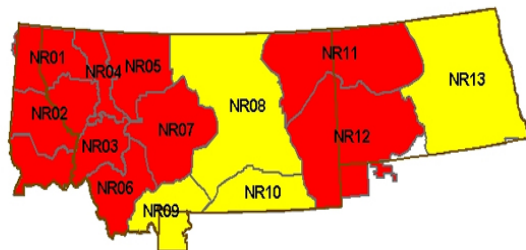
Northern Rockies Coordination Center

<http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/>

I. Background Information

Since June, hot and dry weather has dominated the region creating very high to extreme fire conditions. Fire Indices are at an all time high while fuel moistures are low. Accompanying the high indices are weather patterns that have set the conditions for lightning and lightning caused starts. High pressure weather patterns over the region are responsible for the high temperatures and little to no moisture. Occasional cold fronts push through the region causing severe lightning storms that ignite wildfires. Rain has accompanied some of these fronts but a return to a high pressure system mitigates any moisture that fell.

The current weather forecast projects a continuation of high pressure systems through August and possibly into September. The ERC map, (right) is an indication of the potential "heat release" from fires. Yellow indicates "Above Normal" and Red indicates "Much Above Normal".



Inquiries regarding contracting fire equipment and other resources, should be directed to the interested party's local dispatch center or Geographic Area Coordination Center, see:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/fire/nrcg/agree-contract/signup.html>

Fire Restrictions & Closures: Portions of the state are currently under Stage I or Stage II Fire Restrictions. For definitions of these restrictions, see:

<http://www.mt.blm.gov/fire/restrictions/stagel.pdf>

<http://www.mt.blm.gov/fire/restrictions/stagell.pdf>

Fire Restrictions in effect for specific areas:

<http://www.mt.blm.gov/fire/restrictions/index.html>

Air Quality & Smoke: The Montana Department of Environmental Quality issues a daily forecast and discussion of potential smoke impacts throughout the state. The forecast can be accessed at <http://www.deq.state.mt.us/fireupdates/index.asp>.

Road Closures & Travel Restrictions:

<http://www.mdt.mt.gov/travinfo/reports/alerts.shtml>

Department of Fish, Wildlife, & Parks

[Current Fire Restrictions](#)

[Drought & Fire Updates](#)

[Drought & Fire News](#)

Department of Revenue

<http://mt.gov/revenue/forindividuals/taxrelieffordisaster.asp>

Department of Agriculture

<http://agr.mt.gov/crops/hayFirst.asp>

II. Current Incident Situation - Incidents listed according to current NRCG priority. *(This report includes summary information for Montana fires that are currently greater than 100 acres in size. Fires are being dropped from this report once they reach 100% containment)*

The Northern Rockies Coordination Center (Missoula) has assigned an Area Command Team (Zimmerman) to help analyze assessments for long duration fires and emerging incidents.

Tin Cup is 4 miles west of Darby. Kaage's Type 2 IMT is assigned. The Tin Cup Fire is 580 acres and 60% contained. Personnel assigned: 283. Cause: Under Investigation. Structures are threatened. Evacuations are in effect. American Red Cross Shelter is open in Darby. Active ground fire with torching, group torching and short crown fire runs.

Jocko Lakes started on the CSKT lands (Flathead Agency, BIA), twenty-six miles NE of Missoula; 8 miles W of Seeley Lake. Wilcox's Type 1 IMT is in command of the incident. The Jocko Lakes Fire is 16,600 acres and 10% contained. Personnel assigned: 547. Cause: Lightning. The fire is burning in timber, litter, and under-story. Structures are threatened in areas west of Highway 83, Placid Lake, and Double Arrow Ranch Subdivision. The Town of Seeley Lake is threatened. Evacuations are in place but, if favorable fire conditions permit, some evacuations could be lifted. American Red Cross Shelter is open in Bonner. Highway 83 is closed except to residents and fire resources. Structures (8) have been lost. Regular community meetings are being held. Group torching and short range spotting.

Chippy Creek, is located forty-two miles southwest of Kalispell, and 24 miles N of Thompson Falls, MT (Northwestern Land Office, Montana DNRC). Raley's Type 2 IMT is assigned. Size is 56,365 acres and is 10% contained. Personnel assigned: 506. Cause: Under Investigation. Structures are threatened. Evacuations have been ordered. American Red Cross Shelter is open at the Marion Elementary School. Burning in timber and under-story. Fire behavior included short, uphill runs, and backing fires. Community meetings are being held every evening at the Town of Hot Springs.

Sawmill Complex is located on the Lolo NF. The complex includes a total of 19,900 acres with 5% containment and consists of the Sawmill Creek, the Wyman #2, and the Fisher Point fires. Heintz's Type 2 IMT is assigned. Personnel assigned: 525. Cause: Lightning. Structures threatened. The fires each exhibited single tree and group tree torching and short crown runs.

Skyland is located on the Flathead NF near Summit. Pendleton's Type 1 IMT is assigned. Fire is 38,035 with 37% containment. Fire has burned about 9,031 acres on the Blackfeet Nation. Personnel assigned: 1,031. Cause: Lightning. Two structures are confirmed lost. Evacuations have occurred. East Glacier is on evacuation notice. The Skyland Fire was not as active yesterday.

Brush Creek is located on the Flathead NF, twenty-five miles west of Whitefish, MT. Brush Creek is 22,928 acres with 12% containment. Koehler's Type 2 IMT is assigned. Personnel assigned: 415. Cause: Lightning. Structures are threatened. Road and recreation site closures. Evacuations are in effect. Fire behavior moderated yesterday.

Rombo Mountain, Bitterroot NF. Eighteen miles south of Darby, MT. Svalberg's Fire Use Management Team is assigned. Estimated size is 3,300 acres. Personnel assigned: 172. Cause: Lightning. Structures are threatened. Intense uphill crown runs and spotting up to ½ mile. Primary direction of spread was to the north, northeast, and east.

Ahorn Fire on the Lewis and Clark National Forest in Lewis and Clark County is being managed by Whitney's Type 1 Team. Current size is estimated at 44,150 acres and is 5% contained. Personnel Assigned: 357. Cause: Lightning. Structures are threatened. Evacuations in effect. Continue and increase preparation work along the Willow Beaver Road.

Fool Creek on the Lewis and Clark and Flathead National Forests in Lewis and Clark County, approximately 30 miles NW of Choteau, is now 32,365 acres. Personnel assigned: 164. Cause: Lightning. Larsen's Type III Team is assigned. Structures remain threatened. Structure protection plans are implemented on the structures in Massey Tract, 7 Lazy P Ranch and Teton Pass Ski Area. A new spot fire located at the top of the Teton Pass Ski Area.

Meriwether located on the Helena National Forest in and around the Gates of the Mountains Wilderness. Oltrogge's Type 1 IMT's is managing this fire. Current size is estimated at 40,697 with 65% containment. Personnel Assigned: 148. Cause: Lightning. Structures are threatened. Holter Lake Recreation Area Campground was reopened yesterday.

Briarwood Fire near the Briarwood Golf Course, 5 miles south of Billings. Personnel assigned: 17. Cause: Human. The Briarwood Fire burned 105 acres and is 85% contained. Fire was turned over to local VFD yesterday.

Pattengail Creek on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF. 10 miles NE of Wisdom. The Pattengail Creek Fire is 3,900 acres and 25% contained. Type 3 Incident Organization. Personnel assigned: 54. Cause: Lightning.

Conger Creek on the Lolo National Forest, 20 miles north of Ovando. The fire is 7,400 acres with 0% containment. Type 3 Incident Organization. Structures are threatened. Personnel Assigned: 12. Cause: Lightning. The Conger Creek Fire exhibited moderate growth yesterday.

NEW LARGE FIRES (Large fires are fires over 100 acres in size)

Lost Creek Fire is located on the Crow Reservation, approximately 6 miles SE of Pryor, MT. The fire is currently 315 acres, with 0% containment. A Type 3 Incident Management organization is in place. Personnel assigned: 57. Extreme fire behavior with spotting was observed yesterday.

For more information on Montana Fires: <http://www.inciweb.org/state/27/>.

***The InciWeb.org site continues to have persistent difficulties.
The site appears to be completely "off-line" today.***

III. Weather

Daily Outlook – Friday, 10 Aug 2007

Synopsis: Another upper trough and associated cold front will push east across Idaho and western Montana. Appears to be plenty of gusty winds associated with this feature spreading east across Montana. Ahead of the front expect an increased risk of thunderstorms across southwest and central Montana spreading east late. Storms will likely begin dry but could turn wetter across northeast Montana.

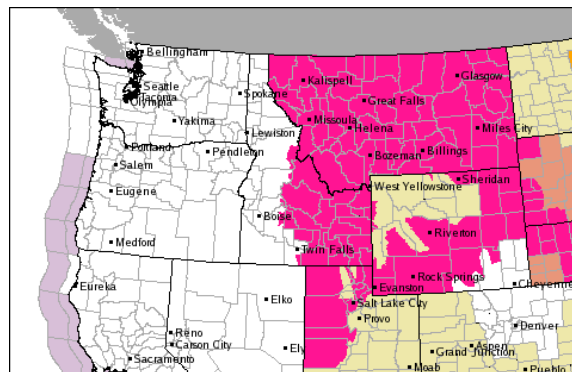
Fire Weather Impacts: Another critical weather day is expected across east Idaho and Montana as gusty winds and low humidity will aid fire spread. The lowest humidity and highest temperatures are expected across the east half of the state with the strongest winds central and west. Moderate to high Haines values also across southern Montana.

Large Fire Risk: Assessed as very high due to the combination of extreme fuel dryness, gusty winds and low humidity.

Red Flag Warnings or Fire Weather Watches:

Today, the NWS has issued Red Flag that cover the entire state. The Warnings are for cold frontal passage followed by gusty west winds and low humidities...

Definitions of a Fire Weather Watch and a Red Flag Warning:



A fire weather watch or red flag warning is issued when the combination of dry fuels and weather conditions support extreme fire danger. These products are written for land and fire managers to highlight the increased fire danger.

A fire weather watch is issued up to 72 hours before the above conditions are expected to occur.

A red flag warning is issued when the conditions above are occurring or expected to occur within the next 24 hours.

<http://www.weather.gov/>

Weather Forecast For current Fire Weather Predictions, see the Daily Outlook at: http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/predictive/outlooks/daily_outlook.pdf.

Fire Behavior Forecast For current Fire Behavior Predictions, see: http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/predictive/outlooks/fire_behavior/fire_behavior.pdf

IV. State Declarations

- Statewide Declaration of a Wildland Fire Emergency

V. Local and Tribal Declarations

- **State of Emergency.** The following jurisdictions have declared a state of emergency:

Lewis and Clark
Lake
Cascade
Flathead

Ravalli
Granite
Missoula
Sanders

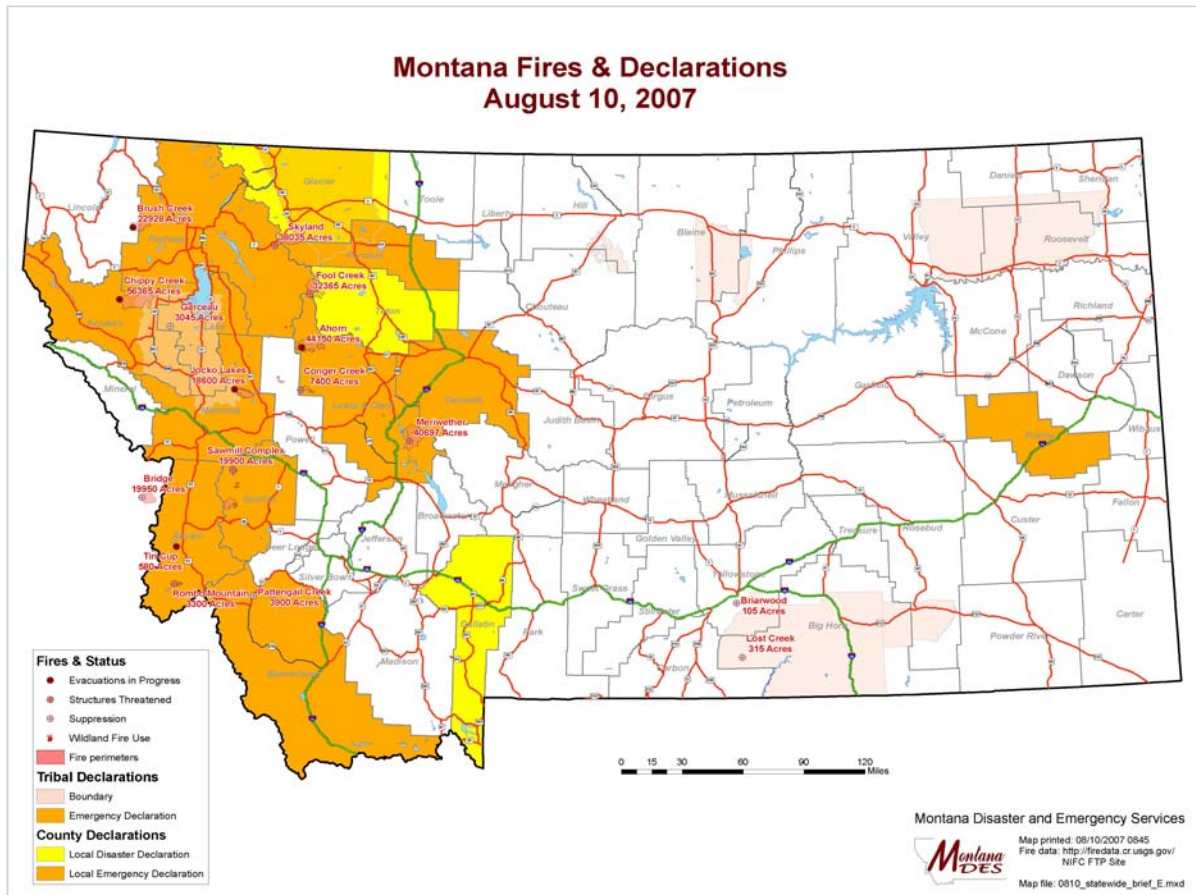
Prairie
Pondera

Beaverhead
Blackfoot Nations

- **Disaster Declaration.** The following jurisdictions have declared a wildfire disaster:

Teton
Glacier

Gallatin



VI. Jurisdictional Emergency Operations

- The Lewis and Clark County Emergency Operation Center was activated on July 19, 2007.
- The Blackfeet Nation has activated and staffed their Emergency Operations Center (7/30/07).
- The Glacier County Emergency Operations Center was activated on July 30, 2007. (Glacier Co. EOC is actually co-located with the Blackfeet Nation's EOC.)
- The Flathead County Emergency Operations Center was activated on August 2, 2007.
- The Teton County Emergency Operations Center was activated on August 2, 2007.
- The Pondera County Emergency Operations Center was partially activated on August 2, 2007.

- The Missoula County Emergency Operations Center is mobile and working in the Seeley Lake area effective 8/4/07. Missoula County has put a call center in place for public information. The phone number is 406-258-3680.
- The Ravalli County Emergency Operations Center has been activated as of 8/6/07.

VII. Requests for State Financial Assistance

- N/A

VIII. Fire Management Assistance Grants

- Jocko Lakes FEMA-2718FM-MT approved 8/4/07

IX. Emergency Management Assistance Compact Resources Committed

- EMAC A Team is assigned to the MT State Emergency Coordination Center.
- Two HEMWTT aviation refuelers from Colorado National Guard to support the Montana Army National Guard have arrived in Helena.

X. Summary of State Resources Committed (through the SECC)

- MT-DES currently has two employees deployed with Incident Management Teams (through the Northern Rockies Coordination Center).
- MT-DES has deployed an Agency Representative to the Blackfeet Indian Reservation Emergency Operations Center (EOC).
- Montana Army National Guard UH-60 Blackhawk modules have been deployed for initial attack to:
 - Kalispell
 - Missoula
 - Helena
- One Montana Army National Guard CH-47 Chinook and module has been deployed to assist Oltrogge's Type 1 Team with fire support on the Meriwether Fire.
- Montana Army National Guard Security Teams (28 personnel each) have been assigned to:
 - Meriwether Fire
 - Sawmill Complex
 - Jocko Lake (2 teams)
 - Fool Creek Fire
- Montana Highway Patrol resources are assigned assist in traffic control and law enforcement support of large fires.
- Starting on July 20, 2007, at 0700 the SECC was staffed and activated to a Level III status with extended hours (0700-1900), seven days a week . The SECC remains at Level III. Outside of those hours, the MT DES staff Duty Officer is available 24 hrs and may be reached at (406) 841-3911.